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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
Raised S.B. 278: AN ACT REQUIRING MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING DISTRIBUTORS TO PAY A COMMUNITY ACCESS FEE.	Support

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first nonprofit conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 125 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various State Park and Forest, trail recreation, sustainable forestry, and land conservation issues.

I am testifying today in support of **SB 278**, An Act Requiring Multichannel Video Programming Distributors to Pay a Community Access Fee.

This bill would require the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to establish a fee paid by subscribers of video streaming, Internet access and cable television to support Regional Community Access Providers (CAPs) and Public, Educational, and Government Access (PEG) Programming channels. This would restore the “one household/one access fee” principle for community access funding that was first established in statute.

Local nonprofit organizations such as CFPA benefit from community access programming, such as the Pete Mezzetti Show that airs on Valley Shore Community Television. These kinds of long-format shows are critical to ensure in-depth, locally-focused programming can continue on town government, education, and many local and regional topics of public interest.

As more people respond to high costs of cable by “cutting the cord” to rely on internet-based streaming video services, funding for CAPs and PEG channel programming is being lost. It would be a huge loss to Connecticut if we can’t find a fix for this dire problem, so we urge your support of SB 278.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.